



**BRANDON L. BEACH**  
District 6

11605 Haynes Bridge Road  
Suite 100  
Alpharetta, Georgia 30004

678.397.0564  
770.594.1059 (Fax)

bbeach@gnfcc.com

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**D**uring the September meeting of the State Transportation Board, October lettings were approved valued at \$108.5 million for 16 ARRA/Stimulus projects and 3 regular program projects. Additionally, 137 Local Assistance Road Program (LARP) projects are also scheduled for letting in October. The remainder of LARP projects will be let in Spring 2010.

Also approved at this meeting was the amended budget for FY2010 and the requested FY2011 budget. Both budgets must be submitted to the Office of Planning and Budget (OBP) for review.

The Department also received a \$10,000 donation to its Wildflower Program from the Garden Club of Georgia. The Garden Club has partnered with the Department for the past 34 years to help beautify the State's roadsides with the planting of wildflower seeds. The Garden Club also recognized the efforts of GDOT District Maintenance staff and their contributions to supporting the Wildflower Program throughout Georgia. Robert McLaughlin from District Five was the winner of the Club's Statewide 2009 Award.



*Georgia Garden Club Roadside Enhancement Coordinator Kathryn Litton presents \$10,000 check to Commissioner Smith*



*District Five's Robert McLaughlin with Georgia Garden Club program co-chairs Kathryn Litton and Rachel Fowler*

The day before the full Board meeting, several Committees held business meetings including the Administrative, Equal Access, Legislative, Finance, Intermodal, Public Private Partnership (P3), Program Delivery, Transportation Agency Partners and High Speed Ground Transportation. A few key highlights of those discussions are:

**Finance Committee** - The audited figures for motor fuel funds have been received from the Georgia Department of Revenue. The FY2010 budget for motor fuel is \$910 million. The FY2010 budget is \$2.562 billion.

The proposed FY2011 budget is based on a further decline in motor fuel funds:

- **estimated at only \$829 million**
- **\$84 million less than reduced FY10 collections**

In the FY2010 budget, the Department is submitting additional funds requests for a few key areas where the need is extremely important. The requests are:

- **\$3 million for intercity rail**
- **\$16 million GO Bonds for Federal match on intercity rail**
- **\$10.8 million GO Bonds for three freight rail lines**

Areas facing the largest challenges from the reduction in state motor fuel funds are directly impacting key areas such as Economic Development, Operations and Safety/Maintenance.

**Intermodal** - Through negotiations with the Governor's Office, an Executive Order had been issued to repair the rail bridge damaged by storms in South Georgia.

**Program Delivery Committee** –Improving the Environmental Approval process is the number one issue for better program delivery. Staff is reviewing the use of “concept” contracting for the environmental assessment prior to full PE, a policy that has worked well in Florida, South Carolina and Tennessee.

Additionally, the use of two-phase PE will need to be a part of the Planning Division's work to be effective. Also called the “scoping” phase, the process may be able to be used on new large projects identified for the 2011-2014 STIP, but not for any projects that are already underway because those projects are past this point.

**High Speed Ground Transportation Committee** – The U.S. Department of Transportation is expected to submit terms and conditions to GDOT for a \$14.2 million study grant award to be used for high speed ground transportation initiatives. The grant requires a 20 percent local match (\$3.75 million). Assistance with the local match requirement was pledged by the City of Chattanooga, Dalton area interests and the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce.



**T**he Department presented ten deserving students with \$1,000 scholarships funded by the Southeastern Association of State Highway & Transportation Officials (SASHTO). The Georgia recipients are GDOT employees Lee Upkins, Zanda Crawford, Audrey Rivers, Charner Rodgers. Other students receiving the scholarships are Kelechi Nwosu, Ryan Whaley, Brittany Luken, Elise Barella, Nicholas Wood and Alek Pochowski.

Those receiving scholarships for academic financial assistance must be enrolled as a student at an accredited college or university in the Southeastern region of the United States, have a grade point average of 3.0 or better, and may be current GDOT employees or students majoring in a field related to transportation.

***Next Board Meeting October 15th - Columbus, Georgia***